

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USMISSION GENEVA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 6751

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, GE

SUBJECT: CSCE BASKET II: ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL INFORMATION IN THE GDR

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REF: STATE : 233202

1. (1) GDR STATISTICS ON PRODUCTION, NATIONAL INCOME, CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTIVITY ARE PUBLISHED ONCE ANNUALLY IN THE STATISTICAL YEARBOOK OF THE GDR (STATISTICHES JAHRBUCH DER DDR) WHICH APPEARS ABOUT TEN MONTHS FOLLOWING THE YEAR COVERED. AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE STATISTICAL YEARBOOK, THE STATISTICAL HANDBOOK OF THE GDR, APPEARS 8-9 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE YEAR COVERED. GLOBAL FIGURES ON THE STATE BUDGET ARE PUBLISHED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ANNUAL BUDGET SESSION OF THE VOLKSKAMMER IN DECEMBER. BUDGET MATERIALS RELEASED AT THAT TIME CONSIST OF A SKETCH OF THE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR TO COME, AND ABOUT TWO PAGES OF DETAIL ON ACTUAL

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VS. PLANNED BUDGET FIGURES FOR THE YEAR WHICH ENDED

THE PREVIOUS DECEMBER.

(2) FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS APPEAR ONLY IN THE STATISTICAL YEARBOOK. THEY CONTAIN NO PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND DO NOT PURPORT TO ACCOUNT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE GDR'S FOREIGN TRADE, I.E. FIGURES ARE PROVIDED FOR "SELECTED" IMPORTS AND EXPORTS FOR "SELECTED" COUNTRIES. GDR FOREIGN TRADE FIGURES ARE THUS SKETCHY; AND APPARENTLY GETTING WORSE. THE STATISTICAL HANDBOOK CONTAINING DATA FOR 1975 WHICH JUST APPEARED, IN CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS YEARS, CONTAINED ONLY FIGURES FOR TRADE "TURNOVER", I.E. EXPORTS PLUS IMPORTS, WITH VARIOUS FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THE ONLY EXPORT AND IMPORT FIGURES GIVEN WERE FOR TOTAL DR EXPORTS AND TOTAL GDR IMPORTS. THE GDR PUBLISHES NO BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DATA.

(3) LAWS AND REGULATIONS ON FOREIGN TRADE ARE PUBLISHED. FOR PERSPECTIVE, HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT MOST DECISIONS ON FOREIGN TRADE ARE MADE IN AN INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS TO WHICH OUTSIDERS HAVE NO ACCESS. THIS MEANS THAT LAWS AND REGULATIONS ARE OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE.

(4) INFORMATION ON THE GENERAL ORIENTATION OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC PLANS IS PUBLISHED, AND IT IS POSSIBLE TO DISCERN THE MAIN LINES OF GER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FROM PUBLISHED MATERIALS.

(5). LISTS AND DIRECTORIES OF FOREIGN TRADE CONTACTS PUBLISHED BY THE GDR ARE VERY GENERAL IN NATURE, PROVIDING THE NAME AND ADDRESS, AND A GENERAL LISTING OF PRODUCT LINES HANDLED BY THE ORGANIZATION IN QUESTION. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, THE GDR HAS NOT OBJECTED TO OUTSIDE EFFORTS TO COMPILE MORE DETAILED LISTS AND CHARTS, BUT HAS MADE NO EFFORT TO PERFORM THIS JOB ITSELF.

2. REPLYING TO THE QUESTIONS OF PARA 1 OF REFTEL, WE WOULD SAY:

- THE GDR'S RECORD OF PUBLICATION OF BASIC STATISTICAL REPORTS IS NOT IMPRESSIVE. THE ANNUAL STATISTICAL

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YEARBOOK IS ADEQUATE FOR MANY PURPOSES FOR THE LAY READER, BUT LACKS DETAILED DATA REQUIRED BY PROFESSIONAL ANALYSTS IN MOST FIELDS. FOREIGN TRADE DATA, WHICH APPEAR LATE, ARE NOT COMPREHENSIVE, AND HAVE NO CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM ARE PARTICULARLY UNSATISFACTORY. INDICATIVE OF THE GENERAL SITUATION IN RESPECT TO FOREIGN TRADE DATA IS GDR REFUSAL TO SUPPLY INFORMATION ON THE RATE OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE GDR FOREIGN TRADE DATA UNIT

OF ACCOUNT , THE " VALUTA MARK", AND ANY OTHER CURRENCY.

- INFORMATION IS NOT BEING REPORTED IN ANYTHING LIKE THE DETAIL OF STANDARD INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DATA, FOR ARE WE AWARE OF THE USE OF ANY STANDARD INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS IN PUBLISHED STATISTICAL MATERIALS.

- WITH THE EXCEPTION OF SCATTERED AND CRYPTIC REFERENCES IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRESS REPORTS, STATISTICAL DATA ON AGRICULTURE IS PUBLISHED EX-POST, AND COULD NOT SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR SERIOUS MARKET AND CROP ASSESSMENTS.

- BECAUSE GDR AUTHORITIES APPEAR TO PLACE A HIGH VALUE ON CONCEALMENT OF DETAILED AND TIMELY STATISTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY AND THE ECONOMY, THE TASK OF OBTAINING BETTER INFORMATION IS DIFFICULT. WE BELIEVE IT CAN BE OBTAINED, IF AT ALL, ONLY WHEN THE GDR CAN BE SHOWN THAT WITHHOLDING STATISTICAL INFORMATION INVOLVES A COST OR LOSS TO THE GDR. FOR EXAMPLE, IF FOREIGN BANKS REFUSED TO EXTEND CREDIT TO GDR ENTITIES IN THE ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DATA, THE GDR MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO PROVIDE SUCH DATA.

- BEYOND FOREIGN TRADE DATA, WHICH IS CALLED FOR IN THE CSCE FINAL ACT, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DATA WOULD BE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE. MEANINGFUL BUDGET DATA WOULD, OF COURSE, BE OF INTEREST; BUT THE LIKELIHOOD OF THE GDR'S ACCEDING TO WESTERN REQUESTS FOR SUCH INFORMATION IS SMALL, GIVEN ITS STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE.

- WE HAVE NO REASON TO THINK THAT THE QUALITY OR QUANTITY OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE BY THE GDR HAS CHANGED SINCE THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT WAS SIGNED LAST YEAR.

COOPER

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